

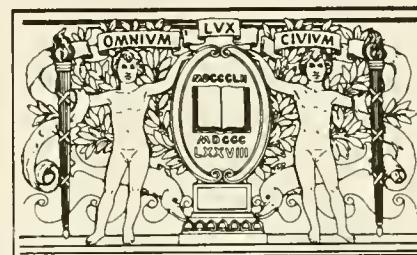
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Salute to New England Month

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS - 17th CENTURY HOUSE

July 1980 on Boston Common

The oldest standing frame house in Massachusetts and North America is the Fairbanks house in Dedham, built in 1636-37. Numerous alterations to the building over three and a half centuries have changed the original construction, but by virtue of a series of drawings and photographs that survive and a carefully researched study of the house by Abbott Lowell Cummings of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, it is possible to reconstruct the oldest section to scale, using the tools and methods employed in Seventeenth Century house-framing. At the time of the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, timber-frame technology was at the peak of its development in Western Europe, and the emigrants to New England carried this extraordinary skill and expertise with them. To reframe a facsimile of one of the earliest wooden buildings in the new world will provide a central focus to the Seventeenth Century Festival on the Common and serve as an important reminder that the settlers of the Bay Colony were not practicing primitive arts in a new world, but the finest traditions of their native cultures from the earliest days of settlement.

The facsimile of the Fairbanks house central bay will be constructed on the Common prior to the opening of the Festival and be raised on the first day to start off the celebration. The frame will remain standing on the Common throughout July and then be taken down and stored until it is reassembled and installed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts during the Seventeenth Century exhibition in February 1982. Afterwards, the assembled frame could be permanently installed in an area museum. The 350th anniversary celebration will therefore see the first unveiling of this important project as part of the joint Boston Museum of Fine Arts/Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities/Plimoth Plantation Seventeenth Century Festival in July 1980. This important Jubilee 350 project will have great appeal to Boston residents and tourists alike.

The Seventeenth Century House Project is jointly directed by Jonathan Fairbanks, Curator of the Department of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) and Abbott Lowell Cummings, Executive Director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). The MFA and SPNEA are also collaborating on this project with the American and New England Studies Program of Boston University with the assistance of Gerald Gross, Vice President for the Arts at Boston University, and with the Plimoth Plantation. The Project Coordinator is Joy Cattanach, who has her masters degree (1978) from The American and New England Studies Program at Boston University and is currently working on the major MFA exhibit New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century, scheduled for February 1982.



The MFA and SPNEA have hired Robert Tarule of Plainsfield, Vermont as the Master Craftsmen and Principal Contractor for the Seventeenth Century House Project. Mr. Tarule completed his masters in medieval literature at Harvard University, and is an expert in Northern Europe medieval languages and tools. He has taught at Goddard College and at Harvard, and among his other accomplishments, has built a Seventeenth Century facsimile building as a private residence and recently completed the Seventeenth Century house-frame facsimile for the Robert Hall Fleming Museum in Burlington, Vermont. He has worked extensively with timber-framing tools and done wide research on hewn timbers and joinery techniques. He is a 1963 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wesleyan College.

In addition to actual construction of the Fairbanks house facsimile and its exhibition at the Seventeenth Century Festival, the 1982 MFA exhibition, and its final, permanent installation, we hope to produce a film detailing the process by which the facsimile is crafted. From the first hand-cut saw strokes through the final raising of the bay on the Common, we will capture for permanent record the most authentic recreation of a piece of Seventeenth Century architecture ever made. This film will hopefully be available to the wider public through WGBH-TV and available to school groups and other interested organizations. The film will also serve as the introduction to the architecture section of the Seventeenth Century exhibition at the Museum.

#### Related Activities of Salute to New England Month

##### 1. Seventeenth Century Festival

Saturday, July 19 through Friday, July 25: Boston Common  
Coordinated by the Plimoth Plantation with the assistance of SPNEA

- Crafts demonstrations of cloth, building, metal, leather, carving, furniture, and agricultural trades
- Seventeenth Century music, games, theater, dances, and food
- In a Seventeenth Century market setting, with costumed guides speaking Seventeenth Century dialect

##### 2. New England Sites Come to Boston Common for Jubilee 350

Includes Sturbridge Village, Plimoth Plantation, Strawberry Banke, and many others: Tuesday, July 1 - Thursday, July 17; Monday, July 28 - Thursday, July 31

##### 3. Copley Society

Major competition and exhibit of New England artists at Copley Society Headquarters on Newbury Street and at Federal Reserve Bank: July and August

##### 4. Society of Arts and Crafts

350 Years of New England Arts and Crafts -- Exhibit at City Hall Gallery: July and August



5. Conferences of New England Governors and Mayors

On issues of shared concern such as tourism, energy, and environmental programs

6. Reception for New England Month participants at John Hancock Observatory

Publications of New England Month

1. Festival Program -- explaining the MFA Seventeenth Century House, the various crafts, biographies of craftspeople, and all other Festival activities
2. Guide to Seventeenth Century Sites and Houses in New England -- To be prepared by the MFA and SPNEA and distributed first at the Festival and then throughout New England during 1980 and 1981. It will list all New England historic houses, archaeological sites, and museums with strong Seventeenth Century collections.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS: 17th CENTURY HOUSE

July 1980 - Boston Common

BUDGET

I. Labor

1. Robert Tarule, Principal Contractor: 36 weeks (Monday, December 1, 1979 through Sunday, August 9, 1980) x 4 days/week @ \$100/day, plus 12 days (September - November, 1979)	\$15,600
2. Edward M. Levin, Assistant Contractor: 5 preparation days @ \$100/day	500
3. Crew: 4 workers for 6 weeks x 5 days/week @ \$100/day (Thomas Renshaw, Kenneth Power, Edward Smith, Edward M. Levin)	<u>12,000</u>
	SUB TOTAL <b>28,100</b>

II. Lumber for Frame

Cost of sawn lumber (white oak, red oak), logs to hew (handpicked, green timber), hewing labor	<b>7,940</b>
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III. Transportation of Timber Frame

**1,500.**

IV. X-Rays, Tools, Drafting

1. X-Rays for Fairbanks House (David Hart, Abbott L. Cummings)	2,000
2. Tool reproduction (Ray Larsen)	1,000
3. Drafting services (Alice Webber)	<u>300</u>
	SUB TOTAL <b>3,300</b>

V. Project Coordinator

Joy Cattanach, Project Coordinator: 9 months (December 1979 through August 1980) @ \$560/month	<b>5,040</b>
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VI. Documentary and still photography, including film and developing

**1,500**

VII. Signage, labels, educational materials

**1,000**

VIII. Storage of disassembled house frame, August 1980 through January 1982: 18 months @ \$60/month

**1,080**

IX. Contingency/Inflation

**540**

**GRAND TOTAL \$50,000**





